

REMARKS

I. Status of Claims

Claims 1-15 are pending in the application.

Claims 1, 9, 10 and 12 have been amended to recite that the regeneration water contains substantially no chlorine, no cleaning component and no other additives. Support for the amendment can be found, for example, at pages 17 and 18 of the specification, which describes that the regeneration water contains substantially no chlorine because chlorine inhibits catalytic activity, and that the regeneration water is virtually neutral, and contains no components that are conventionally employed for cleaning, such as acids, alkali and other additives.

No new matter is added. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests entry and consideration of the Amendment.

II. Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

A. Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,232,254).

B. Claims 12-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider in view of Sueyoshi, et al. (JP 53-125964).

Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claims 1, 9, 10 and 12, and claims depending therefrom, are patentable, at least for the following reason.

Present Claim 1 is directed to a method for regenerating an NO_x removal catalyst employed in a flue gas NO_x removal apparatus. The method consists of a regeneration step of immersing the NO_x removal catalyst in the form of a columnar honeycomb structure, with bubbling from the NO_x removal catalyst, from 1 to 30 minutes at ambient temperature in regeneration water containing substantially no chlorine, no cleaning component and no other

additives; removing the catalyst from the regeneration water; and removing water from the catalyst; and a treatment step including treating the regeneration water which has been employed in the regeneration step in an ordinary wastewater treatment facility without performing a heavy metal treatment step on regenerating water. Claims 9, 10 and 12 similarly recite that the regeneration water contains substantially no chlorine and no cleaning component and no other additives.

In comparison, the regeneration water of Schneider is described as being demineralized water with vanadium, molybdenum or tungsten added to the water, as described at column 4, lines 13-16. Since Schneider includes additives in the regeneration water, Schneider does not meet the regeneration water of amended Claims 1, 9, 10 and 12 which substantially contains no other additives.

In view of the above, Claims 1, 9, 10 and 12 and claims depending therefrom are patentable over Schneider. Further, Sueyoshi does not cure the above-discussed deficiency in Schneider.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103(a) rejections of Claims 1-15.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

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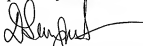
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Respectfully submitted,



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